

Thus the potential benefits, if numbers of individuals can actually learn to move from Model I to Model II, also seem significant. At the least, we can say that the six executives mentioned in his article learned (finally) something that was not superficial, something that appeared to be deeply ingrained and changed the way in which they approached the entire fabric of their relationships with others within their organizations.

Fiedler's approach seems potentially applicable to an analysis of all kinds of leadership situations. Thus, if he is on the right track first in identifying the crucial situational variables and second in his judgment about the relative lack of malleability of the adult personality, then he provides an approach that should be useful to some degree regardless of the type of organizational setting.

Vroom's approach deals with a more limited

aspect of leadership. However, to the extent that having subordinates participate in decisions is a key aspect of any managerial job, he offers a kind of approach that can add to the leader's repertoire of responses in dealing effectively with such situations.

In conclusion, all three articles address themselves to a topic of continuing importance to both individuals and organizations. The articles give some of the best available thinking on the subject of leadership, and they indicate what kinds of progress have been made in learning more about it and, particularly, how such knowledge can be put into practice. Just as there will never be *the* definitive investigation of leadership, there will never be *the* definitive article on it. The present articles, however, represent progress in research and point the way toward some possibly exciting advances in the future.

Reading 34

The Leadership Game: Matching the Man to the Situation

Fred E. Fiedler

Most people in management would agree that leadership training accomplishes something. Whether it always does what it is intended to do is another question. Most of us know someone whose behavior changed or whose performance improved after he went through a leadership training program. Unfortunately, most of us also know about as many people who have gone through one training program after another and still perform as poorly as ever. Even more intriguing are the many outstanding leaders who have had little or no leadership training at all—Joan of Arc being a stellar example.

Empirical studies of leadership training generally reveal the same disappointing results. On the average, people with much training perform about as well as people with little or no training, and reviews by Stogdill; Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, and Weick; and others present no evidence that any particular leadership training method consistently improves organizational performance.

Research by my associates and me has revealed the same disappointing results. When we compared a group of Belgian navy recruits and a well-trained and experienced group of petty officers, for example, we found no over-

all differences in leadership performance. In a follow-up study in Canada, basic trainees performed their leadership tasks as well as captains and majors who had graduated from military college. These experimental studies are supported by results from field research. Nealey and I found no relationship between amount of training and performance of post office managers as rated by their immediate superiors. In addition, I found zero correlations between amount of training and performance of police patrol sergeants. Recent studies show similar findings for officers and noncommissioned officers of an American infantry division.

This does not necessarily mean that leadership training need be ineffective. Quite the contrary. Our data suggest that leadership training, under certain conditions, systematically improves the performance of some leaders while it decreases the performance of others. Obviously, we have to understand the conditions under which leadership training is effective if we are to make much progress in this area.

While recognizing the legitimacy of leadership training designed to improve job satisfaction and to enhance personal growth, I want to confine my remarks here to training that aims to improve task performance as it is defined by an organization.

First, let me briefly comment on present training approaches. Then I will propose a preliminary theory of leadership training as well as present some data that support this formulation. Last, I will describe the training program that we have developed on the basis of this theory and that we are currently validating.

CURRENT PRACTICES BASED ON QUESTIONABLE ASSUMPTIONS

Let us first look at present practices and, in particular, their underlying assumptions. One assumption that guides many training pro-

grams is the notion that there is one ideal kind of leadership behavior or attitude that is related to good performance under all conditions and that every trainee therefore needs to adopt. For example, several prominent authorities contend that a good leader has to be permissive, participative, or human-relations-oriented.

If we take a close look at the empirical results, however, it is obvious that neither the permissive, considerate leaders nor the autocratic, directive leaders obtain optimum performance under all conditions. Yet any training program that seeks to develop the same kind of leadership behavior or attitude implicitly assumes that there is one best leadership style.

A second major assumption in many programs is that leadership behavior is under voluntary control, that a few weeks of telling a leader how to behave or convincing him that a certain kind of behavior is best will result in the appropriate behavior changes.

This ignores the fact that leadership situations are highly emotion-charged, interpersonal relationships that mean a great deal to the subordinate as well as to his boss. We probably expect more change in interpersonal behavior than a routine training program can hope to deliver. The manner in which we relate to authority figures and subordinates is for most of us a very important interaction that we learn over many years. And it is very difficult indeed to change such significant emotional relationships. It is essential, therefore, that we ask just how much control the typical leader actually has over his own behavior.

Our studies suggest that a leader can voluntarily change his leadership behavior only in situations in which he has a great deal of control. In situations in which a leader is under pressure, in which there is considerable uncertainty and insecurity, leadership behavior seems to depend on the way the individual's personality interacts with his leadership

situation. A didactic approach—telling a leader to be more considerate, permissive, or decisive—is about as effective as telling someone that he should be more lovable or less anxious.

A third assumption is that the more powerful and influential leader will be more effective because he will be able to make his group work harder on the organization's tasks. On the basis of this assumption, many training programs try to increase a leader's control and influence in various ways. They give him human-relations training so that he can make himself more acceptable to his subordinates. This supposedly will enable him to motivate his subordinates to work harder. These programs may give a leader technical training so that he can increase his expertise. They teach him the intricacies of an organization so that he can make full use of his legitimate power, knowing where power lies within the organization as well as knowing what rewards and punishments the organization has to offer.

This approach ignores the fact that the leadership situation is an arena in which a leader must satisfy his own needs as well as the needs of his organization. Where a leader's and an organization's needs are incompatible, the leader's needs are apt to take precedence. At the very least, they are likely to interfere with satisfying the needs of the organization.

An equally questionable assumption is at the basis of participative management training, which holds that a leader who shares his decision-making functions with his subordinates will therefore be more effective. As Jon Blades has recently shown, the effectiveness of participative management depends in large part on the intelligence and ability of the group members. The leader who listens to the advice of unintelligent people can hardly expect brilliant answers.

Let me stress again, however, that training in participative management or in any other kind of leadership approach is not necessarily

bad practice, nor will it be ineffective for all trainees. Rather, we need to be more discriminating about whom we train and the situation for which we attempt to train a particular leader. Most leadership training programs fail to do this because they give all trainees the same training, despite the fact that practically all of the empirical evidence tells us that the performance of a group depends in part on the kind of task and the situation in which the leader has to operate.

Where do we go from here?

THE CONTINGENCY APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP TRAINING

My position on training, not surprisingly, is based on the contingency model of leadership effectiveness. In essence, this theory holds that the effectiveness of a group or an organization depends on the interaction between the leader's personality and the situation. Specifically, we have to match the leader's motivational structure (that is, the goals to which he gives the highest priority) with the degree to which the situation gives the leader control and influence over the outcomes of his decisions.

We measure the leader's motivation by the *Least Preferred Co-worker Scale* (LPC). This scale asks the individual first to think of everyone with whom he has ever worked, and then to describe the one person with whom he could work *least* well. This can be someone with whom he worked years ago or someone with whom he works at the moment. (See Figure 34-1 for the scale of opposing attributes used to describe the least preferred co-worker.)

An individual who describes his or her least preferred co-worker in very negative and rejecting terms (a low LPC) in effect shows a strong emotional reaction to people with whom he or she cannot work—in effect, "If I can't work with you, you are no damn good!"

Think of the person with whom you can work least well. He may be someone you work with now, or someone you knew in the past. He does not have to be the person you like least well, but should be the person with whom you had the most difficulty in getting a job done. Describe this person as he appears to you.

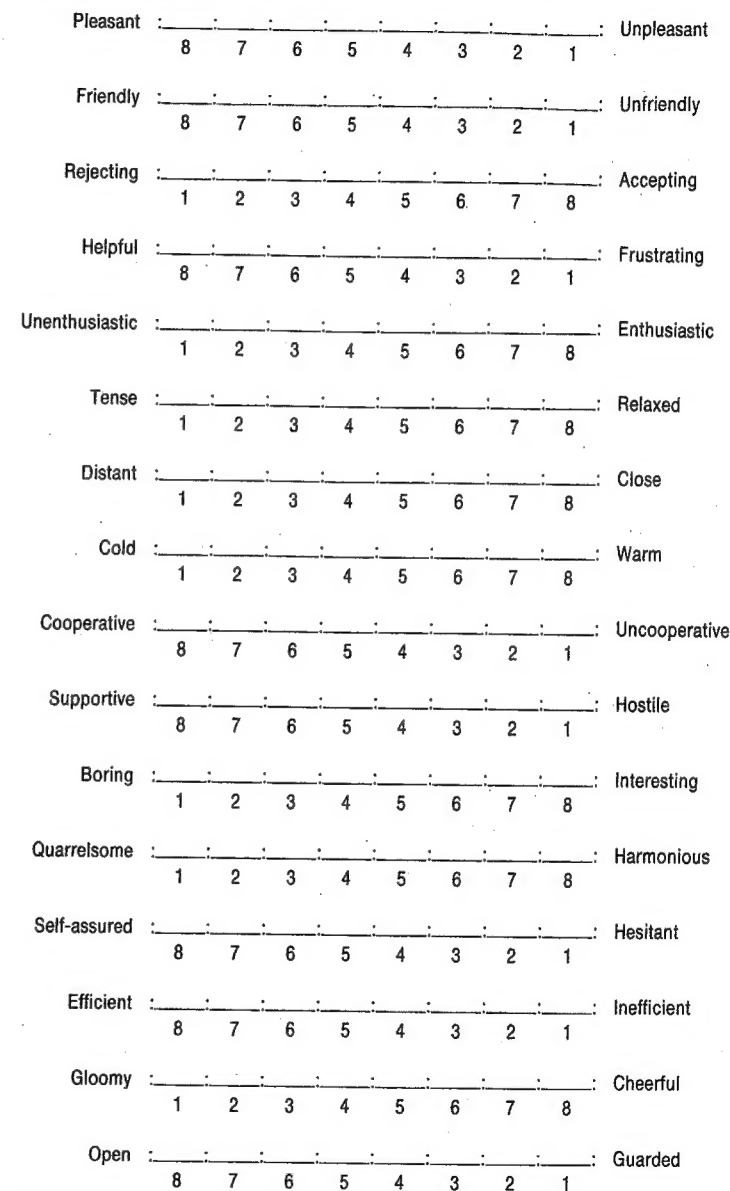


Figure 34-1 Least preferred co-worker scale.

This is the typical pattern of a person who, when forced to make the choice, opts first for getting on with the task and worries about his interpersonal relations later.

Someone who describes even his least preferred co-worker in relatively more positive terms in effect looks at the individual not only as a co-worker but also as a person who might otherwise have some acceptable, if not admirable, traits. The "high LPC" leader sees close interpersonal relations as a requirement for task accomplishment.

Let me, however, strongly emphasize that we are here talking about different priorities of goals. We are not speaking about leader behaviors. The accomplishment of the task might well call for very considerate and pleasant interpersonal behaviors, while the maintenance of close interpersonal relations might be possible only by driving the group to success. In this latter case the relationship-motivated, high LPC leader might be quite single-minded about accomplishing the task. In general we find that uncertain and anxiety-arousing conditions tend to make the low LPC leaders concentrate on the task, while the high LPC leaders concentrate on their relations with their subordinates. The opposite is the case in situations in which the leader is secure and in control.

The other major factor in this theory is defined by the "situational favorableness" that basically indicates the degree to which the leader has control and influence and, therefore, feels that he can determine the outcomes of the group interaction. We generally measure situational favorableness on the basis of three subscales: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power. The leader has more control and influence if (1) his members support him, (2) he knows exactly what to do and how to do it, and (3) the organization gives him the means to reward and punish his subordinates.

The crucial question then is to determine

the specific situations under which various types of leaders perform best. The contingency model has consistently shown that the task-motivated (low LPC) leaders tend to perform most effectively in situations in which their control and influence are very high and in situations in which it is relatively low. By contrast, relationship-motivated (high LPC) leaders tend to perform best in situations in which their control and influence is moderate.

Validating the Model

This relationship has now been found in well over 50 different studies; in fact, a carefully controlled experiment by Chemers and Skrzypek showed that the contingency model accounted for 28 percent of the variance in task performance. The model is most easily described by the schematic drawing in Figure 34-2. The vertical axis shows the group's or the organization's performance. The horizontal axis indicates "situational favorableness"—that is, the degree to which the situation provides the leader with control and influence. The solid line shows the performance of high LPC leaders, and the broken line shows the performance of low LPC leaders. As can be seen, the high LPC, or relationship-motivated, leaders generally perform best in situations in which their relations with subordinates are good but task structure and position power are low. They also perform well when their relations with subordinates are poor but task structure and position power are high (both situations of moderate favorableness as defined in Figure 34-2). Task-motivated leaders perform best when all three factors that define their control and influence are either high or low.

It should be clear from Figure 34-2 that we can improve group performance either by changing the leader's motivational structure—that is, the basic goals he pursues in life—or else by modifying his leadership situation. While it is possible, of course, to change

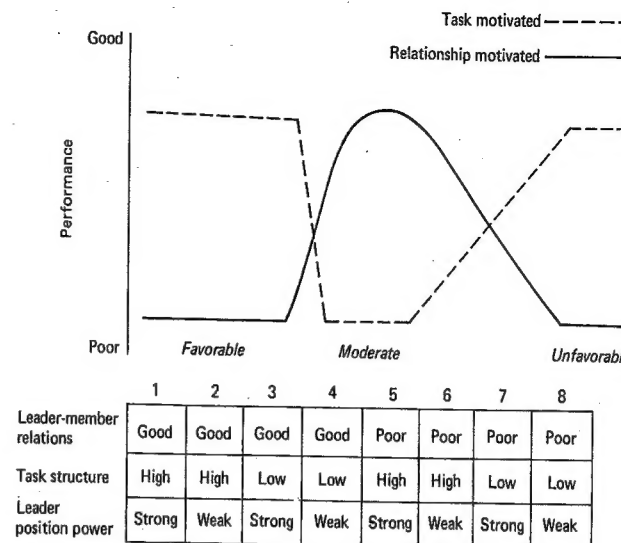


Figure 34-2 Schematic representation of the performance of relationship- and task-motivated leaders in different situational favorableness conditions.

personality and the motivational structure that is a part of personality, this is clearly a difficult and uncertain process. It is, however, relatively easy to modify the leadership situation. We can select a person for certain kinds of jobs and not others, we can assign him certain tasks, give him more or less responsibility, or we can give him leadership training in order to increase his power and influence.

As we said before, most leadership training seeks to increase the favorableness of a situation—that is, it increases the leader's control and influence. It follows that leaders who, for example, start off in an unfavorable situation will gradually move into a zone of moderate situational favorableness. Such a change in control and influence would also change leadership performance: The task-motivated leader who performs well in the unfavorable zone will perform less well with training, while the relationship-motivated leader should improve with training as he moves from the unfavorable to the moderately

favorable zone, toward the left of the graph. Training should, therefore, decrease performance of some leaders but increase it for others.

This was recently demonstrated by a laboratory experiment conducted by Chemers, Rice, Sundstrom, and Butler at the University of Utah. These researchers assembled four-man groups composed of ROTC and psychology students, with an ROTC cadet as the leader. Half the leaders were high and half were low LPC persons. Half were assigned at random to receive training, while the others were given an assignment unrelated to the task.

The group task consisted of deciphering a series of cryptograms. Training consisted of teaching leaders such rules as counting all the alphabet letters and then assuming that the most frequent letter would be an *e*. A three-letter word with an *e* at the end would be *the*. The only one-letter words in English are *a* and *I*, and so on. As it happened in that particular study, the groups had very poor leader-member relations, low position power, and an

unstructured task if the leaders were untrained—thus an unfavorable situation.

We would therefore expect that the task-motivated leaders would perform better than would relationship-motivated ones. With training, the task would become structured and the situation would become moderately favorable. The relationship-motivated, high LPC leaders should then perform relatively better than would task-motivated, low LPC leaders.

Figure 34-3 shows the results of this study. As expected, the low LPC leaders performed better than did high LPC leaders in the unfavorable situation, while high LPC leaders performed better in the moderately favorable situation. However, as the theory predicts but we would not normally expect, the low LPC leaders with training also performed less well than did the low LPC leaders who had not received training.

Similar findings have been reported in real-life situations. For example, we conducted a study of 32 consumer cooperative companies in which we obtained objective measures of performance on all companies in the federation. When we then divided the general managers into those with high and those with low LPC scores, as well as those with relatively little experience and training and those with

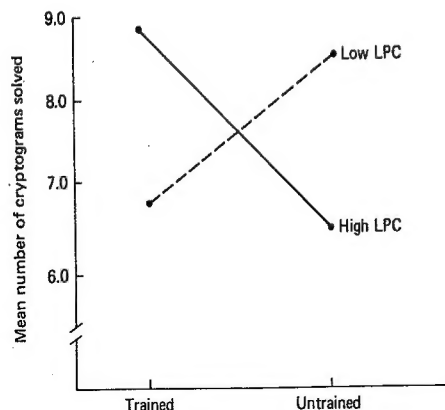


Figure 34-3 Interaction of training and LPC on group productivity.

relatively high experience and concomitant training, we obtained Figure 34-4. Evaluations from several judges indicated that the experienced and trained general manager had a favorable leadership situation. A relatively inexperienced and untrained manager would have correspondingly less control and influence, hence a situation that would be only moderately favorable.

As Figure 34-4 shows, the task-motivated leaders with experience and training performed better than did relationship-motivated leaders. However, the relationship-motivated general managers with relatively less experience and training performed better than did the more highly experienced and trained general managers who were relationship-motivated. Several other studies give similar results.

The question usually arises as to whether the leader could change his motivational structure or his behavior to suit the situation. I would not want to preclude this possibility, but I also really do not think that this is done very easily. As we said before, leadership is a very ego-involving relationship, and in such relationships it is very difficult to control our behavior. It is certainly much more emotionally charged than, say, the interaction between a salesman and a customer or a lawyer and his client. We are talking about patterns of interaction that are fairly central to our personality. The degree to which a person is affected by his relations with others, or the degree to which he is driven to get a job done, is not very easily changed from one day to the next. I don't really think that you can make someone who is cold and businesslike into a warm, cuddly leader in the course of a few hours or even days. Chris Argyris's account of these difficulties documents this point all too well.

A NEW APPROACH TO TRAINING

Let me now get to the point of this symposium. What kind of training would the contin-

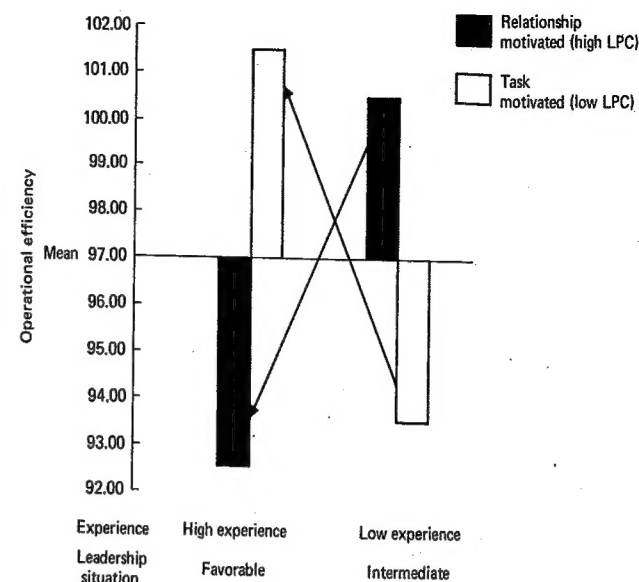


Figure 34-4 The presumed change in performance of relationship- and task-motivated company managers as a function of increased experience.

gency model call for? We have tended to look at people as infinitely malleable, as infinitely capable of changing their behavior and of being changed by just a few hours of training even though the behavior we are trying to change may have been acquired over a whole lifetime. In contrast, we have tended to look at the organization as relatively inflexible and rigid. Most people see themselves as having very little control over their work situation. This is clearly not true. We have to teach people that they have much more control over the relevant aspects of their own leadership jobs than they generally realize. We have to teach them, therefore, that they can change the situation so that it will better match their personality.

The research on the contingency model shows that effective leadership depends on maintaining the right match of personality and of situation. We can certainly teach people how to recognize the particular situations in which they are likely to succeed and those in which they are likely to be less effective. And we can tell them, "If you avoid jobs in which

you are likely to fail, you are bound to be a success."

We now have reason to believe that we can teach people with reasonable accuracy to assess the degree to which their subordinates and their superiors are supportive, the degree to which a task is structured, and the degree to which they have position power.

The next step is to give trainees guidance in seeking or developing leadership situations in which they are most likely to be successful, or to modify their situations to match their personalities. We can also train them in ways to provide their subordinate leaders with conditions that match their motivational patterns.

Successful leaders do this intuitively. They may say about a person that "You have to give him a lot of backing if you want him to be effective." For one person, they may spell out in detail what to do and how to do it; for another, they may just explain what the problem is and then let him run with the ball.

We may not be able to change the warmth and emotional closeness of our relations with others. However, we can frequently modify

our accessibility to subordinates, the degree to which we share information, and the extent to which contacts with subordinates are formal and businesslike or informal, social, and relaxed. We can give detailed, step-by-step task instructions or general policies and guidelines. We can use our position power under some conditions and share decision making under others.

Martin Chemers, Linda Mahar, and I have developed a self-administered programmed manual for leadership training called *Leader Match* that attempts to teach managers how to diagnose their leadership situation, how to determine the kind of situation that best matches their personality or motivational pattern, and how to modify the situation so that it does match their leadership style. One validation study has now been successfully completed, using second-level leaders of a volunteer public health organization that operates in Latin America. Another one involves middle managers of a government agency. In these studies the leaders who were trained with *Leader Match* performed significantly better than did leaders in a comparable, randomly

selected control group. At the time of this writing, a third validation study also seems to be producing significant results. These early results are highly encouraging, and we hope to obtain further evidence during this coming year.

In summary, my own position is that we must train people differentially—not everyone should be trained to behave in the same way or to adopt the same attitudes. In fact, we will be better served by training our leaders in how to change their leadership situations than in how to change their personality. Leadership effectiveness depends on the proper match of person and situation, and trying to change personality is the hard way of achieving this balance. It is an effort with uncertain success that requires years, not weeks. Our recent studies of contingency model training show that leaders can recognize the situations in which they tend to be most successful, and they can modify their situations so that they perform more effectively. We have reason to believe that this approach holds considerable promise for the future of leadership training.

Reading 35

Can Leaders Learn to Lead?

Victor H. Vroom

Like my fellow authors, I start with certain preconceptions. These preconceptions—some may call them biases—influence the way in which I view issues of leadership, particularly leadership in training. I have tried to depict these preconceptions in Figure 35-1.

The central variable in this figure is the behavior of the leader, which I believe is determined by two classes of variables, attributes of the leader himself and attributes of

the situation he encounters. Furthermore, I assume that many of the differences in the behavior of leaders can be explained only by examining their joint effects, including interactions between these two classes of variables.

The left-hand portion of the diagram is the descriptive side of the leader behavior equation. Much of my research has focused on these relationships in an attempt to under-